

From: trinko
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 5:22pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a computer professional, although my Ph.D. is in Physics, I find the proposed settlement completely unacceptable. While I could write a long treatise on the problems with Microsoft I think the basic problem can be summarized via one example. When a Texas based computer manufacturer wanted to put Netscape on the desktop instead of Internet Explorer--because that's what customers wanted--they were told by Microsoft that if they did so they couldn't include Windows with the computers. That's functionally equivalent to telling that company that they couldn't sell PCs anymore. This tactic and variants thereof allowed Microsoft to take over the browser market.

The Microsoft business model is to use their OS monopoly to drive competitors out of business and then sell low quality, low security, intrusive products at high prices. No settlement that doesn't prevent this will benefit the American consumer.

I supported George Bush's campaign with my time and money because I believe in free markets. But free markets require competition. In the absence of competition some form of regulation is required. Microsoft has no competition and hence needs regulation.

The only viable solution I can see is to break Microsoft up into at least two companies. One company can make huge profits selling the OS for 90% of the world's computers while the other can make huge profits selling applications and services. The key problem with the current DOJ settlement is that it doesn't limit the ability of Microsoft to use its OS monopoly to gain monopolies in other areas. The situation is similar to that which might occur if the local water supply company also sold washing machines. Now if that water supply company was nice everything would be fine. If it were run by Microsoft executives however it would not allow competitors washing machines access to water and after hounding by the DOJ it would allow access to water but only after the home owner went through a complex and time consuming procedure that required the skills of a professional plumber. Needless to say few consumers would go through the hassle and would instead buy the "approved" monopoly backed washer.

Microsoft has a proven track record of limited concern about ethics, security, consumer privacy, and product quality. The current DOJ settlement will allow Microsoft to continue to reduce consumer choice, increase consumer cost, and reduce consumer product quality because it doesn't prevent Microsoft from using its OS monopoly to establish monopolies in other areas. Microsoft has shown that it will

try and circumvent any limited solution and will continue to strive to force out of business competitors. Only a dramatic severing of the OS from other Microsoft business units will force Microsoft to compete on the basis of the quality and cost of their products.

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